

Promising Practice: Case Management in the Classroom

Hostos Community College

Allied Health Career Pipeline Program

“If a student is battling or struggling with varying ills, such as anger or aggression, depression, domestic violence, fatigue, financial instability, frustration, housing, hunger, legal issues, limited literacy or employability skills, unemployment or underemployment, that student’s learning will be adversely impacted. That is why having a case manager in the classroom is so valuably vital,” emphasizes Allied Health Career Pipeline Program director Deborah E. Reid.

This is the reasoning behind Ms. Reid’s design of the “Case Management in the Classroom” model for the Hostos Community College Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families’ Office of Family Assistance. A case manager is placed in the classroom with faculty, both to identify barriers to program participation and completion and to devise individual service plans for addressing those impediments. Student barriers might be attendance and punctuality problems, requiring a time management plan; angry, verbally aggressive behavior, needing anger management intervention; or a more serious obstacle, necessitating referral by the student resource navigator for supportive services from a Pipeline Partner Network member agency.

Having a case manager in the classroom creates a supportive learning community for both instructor and student, builds a deeper understanding of a student’s background and needs, and frames the discussions about student cases at weekly case conference sessions. These meetings, which include the case management and the career services teams, are used to formally evaluate students, assess their strengths and deficits and their technical skills development, and measure their progress toward achieving personal, professional, and program goals.

Although faculty and instructors were initially uncomfortable with an onsite case management presence, and students have been unnerved by this method, the “Case Management in the Classroom” approach has contributed immensely to improving program completion rates. It has become an accepted and welcomed case management practice.